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Seventh Meeting of the Conference of Ministers of African Least Developed Countries

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 21-22 April 1987

LG/NAIRCON

REVIEW OF ECA ACTIVITIES FROM APRIL 1986 TO APRIL 1987, THOSE PROGRAMMED FOR THE REMAINDER OF 1987 AND THE WORK PROGRAMMED FOR 1988-1989 IN FAVOUR OF THE AFRICAN LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The review of ECA activities in favour of African LDCs either carried out under the broad programme of Development Issues and Policies or under other of the secretariat's various programmes covering the period 1984-1985 was done in document E/ECA/LDCs.6/EXP.5/5 and submitted to the Fifth meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of African LDCs meeting at Yaounde, Cameroon from 2 to 4 April 1986 and subsequently to the Conference of Ministers of African LDCs meeting at the same venue from 15 to 17 April 1986.

2. The present report reviews secretariat activities in favour of African LDCs both under Development Issues and Policies as well as under other programmes of the secretariat's competence. It covers the period April 1986-April 1987.

3. It should be emphasized once again that according to its terms of reference the secretariat functions in four broad areas including the provision of technical advisory services upon request by member States; indepth studies of development issues identified by the governments individually or collectively as well as by the secretariat; dissemination of information through the medium of publications of which the Survey of Economic and Social Conditions in the African LDCs is an example; substantive servicing of conferences, meetings, seminars, workshops, training courses or representation at meetings of interest to ECA. The secretariat also carries out other activities of interest to the African LDCs including follow-up action on resolutions adopted by the Conference of Ministers of African LDCs. Through an Inter-Divisional Committee on African LDCs established within the ECA, member States of the African LDCs derive benefits from the regular work of the substantive programmes of the secretariat in the areas of food and agriculture, human settlements, industrial development, international trade and finance, natural resources (cartography, marine affairs, minerals, water), energy, human environment, population, public administration, science and technology, social development, statistics, transport and communications.

II. ACTIVITIES IN FAVOUR OF AFRICAN LDCs UNDER DEVELOPMENT ISSUES AND POLICIES

4. In the early part of 1986 the secretariat responded to a questionnaire set by UNITAR for assessing concrete training needs of the managers of the foreign debt in the LDCs in general. In the secretariat's response attention had been drawn to some of the internal causes of Africa's external debt burden and debt service burden, which were listed in the Declaration of the Economic Situation in Africa adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU at its twenty-first ordinary session. These include: lack of effective co-ordination at the national level and inefficient monitoring of foreign commitments; poor design, negotiations and ineffective execution and monitoring projects that lead to increased costs; weak negotiating capacity of African countries vis-a-vis complex international financial mechanisms.

5. Following a request of the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) dated April 1986 for the use of data, information and other logistic facilities, the secretariat compiled a 50-page document of country notes and data for ICADD member States, which include 5 African LDCs, for use by the IGADD National Experts Committee at its five-weeks meeting beginning June 16 at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to prepare and finalize national and subregional programmes and projects for submission to Donors.

Development Issues and Policies

6. Among the documents prepared by the secretariat to service the Seventh Meeting of the Conference of Ministers of African LDCs including its Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of African LDCs are (i) a Survey of prevailing economic and social conditions, problems and policies in African LDCs, 1985-1986; (ii) a review of progress in the implementation of the SNPA in African countries; (iii) the implication of structural adjustment and stabilization programmes for long-term growth and development in African LDCs and (iv) a review of ECA activities from April 1986 to April 1987 in favour of African LDCs and the programme of work for 1988-1989 in favour of African LDCs.

7. At the specific request addressed to it by the Government of the Republic of Mali, the secretariat assisted in establishing a follow-up system for non-project aid.

8. At the request of the Government of Comoros, the secretariat released a staff member for two weeks to assist in the preparation of a World Bank/IMF economic and financial mission to Comoros in November-December. The purpose of the mission was (a) to up-date the 1984 Economic Report (b) to present the broadlines of an adjustment strategy (c) to define an approach to the debt problem and (d) to provide substantial guidance in the design of an integrated macro-economic technical assistance programme to be supported by various donors aimed at the design and implementation of a new development strategy for Comoros.

9. Among the African countries represented and therefore deriving benefit thereof at the Workshop on multisectoral planning models and short-term economic forecasting for policy design in development planning and management in African countries held in Moscow (USSR) from 15 to 28 September were 6 African LDCs including Benin, Burundi, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania and Togo. The Workshop was organized by the ECA in collaboration with the Government of the USSR.

10. The secretariat was represented at the second Round Table organized by the Cape Verdean Government as a means of ensuring an open dialogue and a better understanding between Cape Verde and its partners.

11. The secretariat was also represented at the sectoral meeting of donors on the socio-cultural sector held at Lome, Togo from 20 to 24 October aimed at establishing dialogue of the economy with the precise objective of the project and to present endeavours for the economic and financial improvement that Togo has already initiated. The meeting concentrated on human resources, management capacity and maintenance.

12. Niger, Rwanda and Burundi were among the countries included in the exercise for preparatory assistance to the economic integration of countries and River Basin Organizations for the UNDP 4th Regional Programme in February 1987.

III. OTHER ECA ACTIVITIES IN FAVOUR OF AFRICAN LDCs

Food and Agriculture

13. Lesotho was the beneficiary of discussions with ECA on the project on farm test and demonstration of improved maize packages to small-scale farmers.

14. A follow-up mission was undertaken to Somalia by an ECA multidisciplinary team from 2 to 9 November to discuss a draft programme of co-operation and a draft memorandum of agreement on co-operation and assistance between the Government of Somalia and ECA.

15. A mission was also undertaken to the CEPGL Countries (Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire) between 8 March and 4 May to assist in the assessment of institutional framework of national programmes aimed at reducing food losses.

16. A mission was mounted to the Sudan and Somalia in October as a follow-up to a previous one to study land use and farming systems as basic elements in the solution of the current food crisis in Africa.

Industrial Development

17. A mission was mounted to Guinea from 26 to 30 May in order to assist the Government in its loss-making gari processing plant (located near Faranah town) to achieve commercial viability.

Forest Industries

18. Major plantations of Ethiopia were a subject of study and advice by a staff of the FAO/ECA/UNIDO Forest Industries Advisory Group for Africa (RAF/82/006) including Ethiopian national experts in July. The objective was to advise on criteria for the selection of trees for testing series conducted at present at the Wood Utilization and Research Centre (WUARC) for which the Group was offering assistance as part of its 1986 work programme.

International Trade and Finance

19. 8 African LDCs including Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Gambia, Mali, Niger and Togo were among the beneficiaries in a subregional seminar organized for Western and Central African Countries in Moscow from 14 to 18 July by the secretariats of UNCTAD and ECA. The main theme of the seminar focused on the promotion of trade and economic co-operation between the English/French-speaking African countries of the Central and Western African subregions with the Socialist countries of Eastern Europe.

20. Togo, Guinea Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, Central African Republic, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Burundi, Comoros, Niger, Chad, Benin, Mali and Equatorial Guinea, were among the beneficiaries from lectures on (a) African LDCs in international trade and (b) Intra-African trade between African countries south of the Sahara; trends and prospects delivered by an ECA staff member at the Regional Seminar on African LDCs and International Trade held at Lome, Togo from 8 to 18 September.

Natural Resources

Water resources development

21. 9 African LDCs including Benin, Burundi, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Niger, Sierra Leone, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania participated at the regional meeting on socio-economic and policy aspects of water resources management in Africa organized jointly by the secretariat of ECA and UNESCO at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 2 to 6 June. Among the main topics discussed at the meeting were (a) planning and research of water resources and their assessment; (b) training and research for water supply development in Africa; (c) role of water resources in national socio-economic development and (d) environment and health aspects.

22. 10 African LDCs including Burundi, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Togo, Chad, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Rwanda, Benin and Guinea were among the African countries that participated at the Training Workshop and Study Tour in the USSR on problems of water resources development in Arid Zones for African experts from 1 to 30 September.

Cartography

23. 11 African LDCs including Botswana, Burundi, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Lesotho, Niger, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, and Uganda were, among other countries, the beneficiaries of the 6th United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa organized by ECA and held at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in November.

Mineral resources development

24. Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali and Chad were among the countries of the West African subregion which were a subject of an inventory of fertilizer materials by the ECA in November 1986 as part of the inventory of Africa's mineral resources. The inventory of fertilizer materials meets the pressing need to increase agricultural and food production locally.

Public Administration, Management and Manpower

25. Ethiopia was the beneficiary of an executive development workshop organized by ECA from 12 to 22 May at the request of (a) the Agricultural Equipment and Technical Services Corporation (b) Coffee Plantation Development Corporation; and (c) Ethiopian Livestock and Meat Corporation. Altogether 29 senior executives of the aforementioned Corporations in Ethiopia attended.

26. A mission was undertaken to the Republic of Botswana from 27 to 31 October (i) to advice the Government on institutionalizing manpower planning within respective ministries (ii) to plan a manpower planning workshop for 1987; and (iii) to collect pertinent data and information for the preparation of a technical paper on manpower and employment planning processes in Botswana.

27. Malawi was the beneficiary of a national training workshop on improvement in taxation policies, systems and administration and budgetary management organized by ECA in collaboration with the Malawi Development of Personnel Management and Training, Office of the President and Cabinet, for senior government financial management officers in August.

28. Botswana was also the beneficiary of a public service induction course on public financial management for new graduate entrants into Botswana Civil Service organized by the Botswana Institute of Administration and Commerce in collaboration with ECA at Gaborone, Botswana from 11 to 17 October. The objective of the course on public financial management was to let the new entrants understand how government financial resources were raised, allocated and controlled and to introduce the entrants to the various government regulations which govern public financial operations in Botswana.

29. In view of the growing need for guidance and counselling services for the youth and Elimu Ya Malezi Ya Ujana's (UMAU) need to expand its activities in this field in Tanzania the secretariat mounted a mission from 15 to 16 September for the purpose of rendering advisory services in this field.

30. 4 African LDCs including United Republic of Tanzania, Lesotho, Malawi and Ethiopia were among the beneficiaries in a workshop made up of education/officers, social workers, employment officers, deans of students, researchers and counsellors organized by ECA and UNESCO in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Government of Kenya at Nairobi, Kenya from 21 to 31 July.

Social Development

31. Tanzania was the beneficiary of an ECA mission mounted rom 23 May to 1 June to provide advisory services on the strengthening of national youth policies, programmes and strategies.

Statistics

32. A mission to Ethiopia was undertaken during the period 1-3 April 1986 with the main objective of assisting the Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in applying regression analysis programmes to survey data captured on tape.

33. During the period 5-24 May the Government of Rwanda benefitted from the services of a Regional Advisor in Demographic Statistics. The services rendered included assistance in finalizing a national strategy regarding population; formulation of projects for funding by UNFPA and to assist in getting the project started with external aid.

34. A follow-up mission to the one in September 1985 to incorporate household budget survey data into the national accounts was undertaken to Zanzibar, Tanzania from 25 May to 5 June under the auspices of the National Accounts Capability Programme. A new consumer price index was also to be constructed from these data.

35. A mission was undertaken to Sierra Lone from 3 to 13 July with the objective of reviewing the progress so far made in the post-enumeration phase of the census project (SIL/83/P01) and laying down the future work plan and measures to ensure the completion of the census data processing in the shortest possible time.

36. A mission was also undertaken in Ethiopia during the period January-August to assist the Ethiopian Ministry of Mining in the planning and analysis of the Cooking Efficiency Programme Planning for Ethiopia (CEPPE) longitudinal survey project ILO/WB/GOE.

37. At the request of the Government of the Republic of Botswana, a mission was mounted to the country from 7 to 19 July to advise on the setting up of a system of preliminary estimates of GDP.

Transport and Communications

38. Tanzania was among the countries benefitting from a course on costs and fares for the different modes of transport held at Arusha, Tanzania from 18 April to 4 May 1986 under the auspices of ESAMI. Among the participants in the first international symposium on transport services organized for West and Central Africa at Douala, Cameroon from 26 to 28 May were Benin and Burkina Faso.

39. In a Regional Seminar-cum-study tour on port operations for African countries organized by ECA, UNCTAD and the USSR from 3 to 9 July nine African LDCs participated. These include: Benin, Comoros, Ethiopia, Niger, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Somalia, and Togo. The main topics of the seminar included: port organization and management; port planning and development; modern port technology; training of port personnel; maintenance of port equatorium, duties of port terminal operators; and freight forwarding.

40. Between 11 and 22 October consultations were held between ECA and the Governments of Tanzania and Burundi and subregional institutions in these countries on the progress in the implementation of the Decade projects in general and the projects in the Eastern and Central Africa transit corridor in particular with a view to organizing a co-financing meeting for these projects in the first half of 1987.

41. A mission was mounted to the Central African Republic (12-18 July), Chad (21-23 July) with a view to (a) obtaining the commitment of each country to the concept of corridors for developing transport and communications; (b) identifying projects in the corridors to be presented for co-financing meetings; (c) identifying likely sources of financing; (d) approval of the Plan of Action for organizing the co-financing meeting; and (e) consultations with subregional organization (UDEAC) and banks (BDEAC).

42. Similar missions were also undertaken to Rwanda (23-26 September) and Uganda (27 September-3 October).

43. Between 14 September and 3 October a mission was undertaken to Togo in order to assist Togo Railways in defining a method for obtaining management information.

IV. WORK PROGRAMME FOR 1988-1989 IN FAVOUR OF AFRICAN LDCs

3.1 Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries

Output: Advisory services to African least developed countries, on request, in planning, drawing up of development and project preparation and organization of Round Tables (six missions in 1988 and six in 1989).

3.2 Review of Economic and Social Conditions in individual Least Developed African Countries

Output: Reports to the Conference of Ministers of Least Developed African Countries on a review of economic and social conditions in individual least developed African countries (second quarters of 1988 and 1989).

3.3 Follow-up and monitoring of the Substantial New Programme of Action (SNPA): Evaluation of the effectiveness of SNPA in African LDCs in the 1980s.

Output: Reports to the Conference of Ministers of Least Developed African Countries on the evaluation of the implementation of the SNPA in African LDCs (second quarters of 1988 and 1989).

3.4 Indepth studies on the economies of least developed African countries

Output: (i) Report to the Conference of Ministers of Least Developed African Countries on human resources development and utilization in African LDCs (second quarter 1988);

(ii) Report to the Conference of Ministers of Least Developed African Countries on financial structure and resource utilization in African LDCs (second quarter 1989).

3.5 Conference of Ministers of African Least Developed Countries

Output: Substantive servicing of the meetings of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the African LDCs and the Seventh and Eighth Conferences of Ministers of African LDCs (second quarters of 1988 and 1989).